

RURAL DISTRICT OF ALNWICK.

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH



Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In making my report for the year of 1940, I am directed by the Ministry of Health to be brief in recapitulating the necessary facts, only, and the sanitary condition of the district, so as to establish continuity between previous reports and those of the more settled years for which we all hope. I begin, as directed, with the officers of the Council.

1. Richard Rothwell, Clerk to the Council.
2. Scott Purves., M.D., M.B., C.M.Ed., Medical Officer of Health.
3. Oswald Mozart Farrell, Cert. S.I.B., M.S.I.A., Chief Sanitary Inspector and Building and Sanitary Surveyor.

CLIMATIC CONDITIONS.

After a rather severe winter, spring came early and without frosts and the rest of the year continued a course rather more favourable than usual for agriculture.

GENERAL STATISTICS.

The Area of the Alnwick Rural District is 93,000 acres - 145.3 square miles.

The Population (1939) is 12470.

The number of inhabited houses is 3831.

The Rateable Value is £50,398.

The sum represented by a penny rate £219.

VITAL STATISTICS.

For the following figures I am taking the population of 1939, the last more or less normal year.

The number of deaths in the district, after the usual additions, and subtractions, was 154.

The number of births was 146. There has been no transferable births during 1940. The births and birth rate and the deaths and death rate are shown on the following table with figures for 1939 for comparison.

	Births.	Birth Rate per 1000 per annum.	Deaths.	Death Rate per 1000 per annum.
1939.	183	14.87	141	11.37
1940.	146	11.70	154	12.34

This table can hardly be regarded as favourable, the death rate considerably exceeding the birth rate.

The following table shows the ages at which the deaths occurred and for comparison the figures for the preceeding year are also given.

	Under one year.	1 and under 2 yrs.	2 and under 5 yrs.	5 and under 15 yrs.	15 and under 25 yrs.	25 and under 35 yrs.
1939.	6	0	1	3	4	8
1940	9	0	1	0	7	7

	35 and under 45 yrs.	45 and under 55 yrs.	55 and under 65 yrs.	65 and under 75 yrs.	75 years and over	Total.
1939.	4	3	26	34	52	141
1940.	8	15	23	38	46	154.

The figures for 1940 although satisfactory are not quite so good as for 1939.

INFANTILE DEATH RATE.

The number of deaths of children under one year for 1940 was 9. This gives an infantile death rate of 61.6 per thousand children born. The causes of death were congenital debility 7, convulsions from bowel irritation 1, and pink disease 1.

NOTIFIABLE INFECTIOUS DISEASES

I will first deal with the ordinary infectious diseases excluding tuberculosis which will be taken later in the report. During 1940 Measles and Whooping Cough have been added to the diseases notifiable in our district. The following table shows the number and incidence of the cases as regards the sub-districts.

	Warkworth.	Embleton.	Total.
Scarlet Fever...	2	1	3
Erysipelas ...	0	1	1
Chicken Pox ...	8	4	12
Pneumonia ...	3	0	3
Measles...	77	0	77
Whooping Cough..	4	0	4
Cerebrospinal Fever...	5	0	5
Puerperal Fever...	0	1	1
	<u>99</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>106</u>

Except for Measles it will be seen that there has been very little infectious disease during 1940. The measles epidemic was almost entirely in the South Eastern part of the district. It is worthy of note that in an epidemic of 77 cases of measles there was not a single fatal case, which is remarkable in this very dangerous disease. There were no cases of Enteric Fever, Diphtheria or Ophthalmia Neonatorum.

TUBERCULOUS DISEASE.

During the year 1940, 14 cases of tuberculous disease have been notified in the district. Of these 10 were cases of pulmonary and 4 cases of non-pulmonary tuberculous. There were 10 deaths from tuberculous disease all being pulmonary. As regards the sub-districts the distribution was as follows:-

		<u>Notifications.</u>		<u>Deaths.</u>	
		Pulmonary.	Non-Pulmonary.	Pulmonary.	Non-Pulmonary.
Warkworth	...	7	3	6	0
Embleton	...	3	1	4	0
		<u>10</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>0</u>

NEW CASES OF TUBERCULOUS DISEASE AND

MORTALITY IN THE DISTRICT.

Age Periods.	New Cases.				Deaths.			
	Pulmonary.		Non-Pulmonary.		Pulmonary.		Non-Pulmonary.	
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
5	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
15	0	0	0	1	3	0	0	0
20	3	1	0	0	0	2	0	0
25	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	0
35	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
45	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
55	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0
65 and over.								
Totals.	8	2	2	2	6	4	0	0

The notification of tuberculous disease is satisfactorily carried out in the district.

During the year 1940, 27 deaths were caused by cancer, which is almost the same as the two preceeding years.

As the contents of the latter part of this report which ordinarily deals with Unemployment, Nursing, Hospital Service, Ambulance and Laboratory facilities has hardly varied for several years, I propose for the sake of the brevity required of me, to leave it out, except to mention that the Smallpox Hospital which was taken over by the Government for the treatment of evacuees suffering from scabies and impetigo, has been almost continuously in use, the number of patients varying from about 5 to 15.

Finally I have to thank the Chairman of the Council, the Chairman of the Sanitary Committee and the Members of the Council for their consideration and support and the Clerk and the Inspector for their co-operation and help.

SCOTT PURVES. M.D., M.B., C.M.Ed.,

Medical Officer of Health.